

WEATHER TOMORROW

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Speculation and unrest: setting the price of gasoline

Amber Kiwan

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As Cal Poly students go about their daily lives, attending class, studying and squeezing in time for extracurriculars, a series of events occurring somewhere far away is inevitably having an impact very close to home; specifically, at the gas station.

Gas prices are approaching record highs and California remains one of the most expensive places in the country to fill up.

Business Insider, a business news website, said \$4 is the price tolerance threshold for consumer behavior change, and according to a Los Angeles Times article, California gas prices averaged \$4.205 in the last week, \$1.115 higher than last year. Some fear prices will continue to rise, reach and possibly exceed, the record pricing high of \$4.086 from June 2008.

The big question is who — or what — is to blame? Senator John McCain said President Obama was to blame for 2008's record spike in gas prices, due to Obama's opposi-

tion to drilling oil in the U.S. Most news organizations cite unrest in the Middle East as a primary cause. Others blame it on speculators, but rarely clarify what this exactly means.

Economics professor Eric Fisher said the economics of gas prices is something most people neither un-

derstand nor care about. But among those who do know and care, there tends to be strong differences in opinion regarding which factors are believed to be most important. This depends on the person's political persuasion, their level of education or indifference and the media outlets

they choose.

In general, the factors that influence fluctuations in gas prices can be broken down into four interrelated parts according to Fisher, political science professor Emmit Evans and finance professor Herve Roche.

Supply and demand

Two opposing viewpoints exist regarding the idea of supply and demand and its impact on gas prices.

The first viewpoint is increasing

see Gas Prices, page 2

At \$4.25 per gallon, it's \$68 to fill up.
(average price on the Central Coast) (for an average-16 gallon tank)

That's equivalent to:



22

Starbucks drinks at \$3.50/cup



54.4

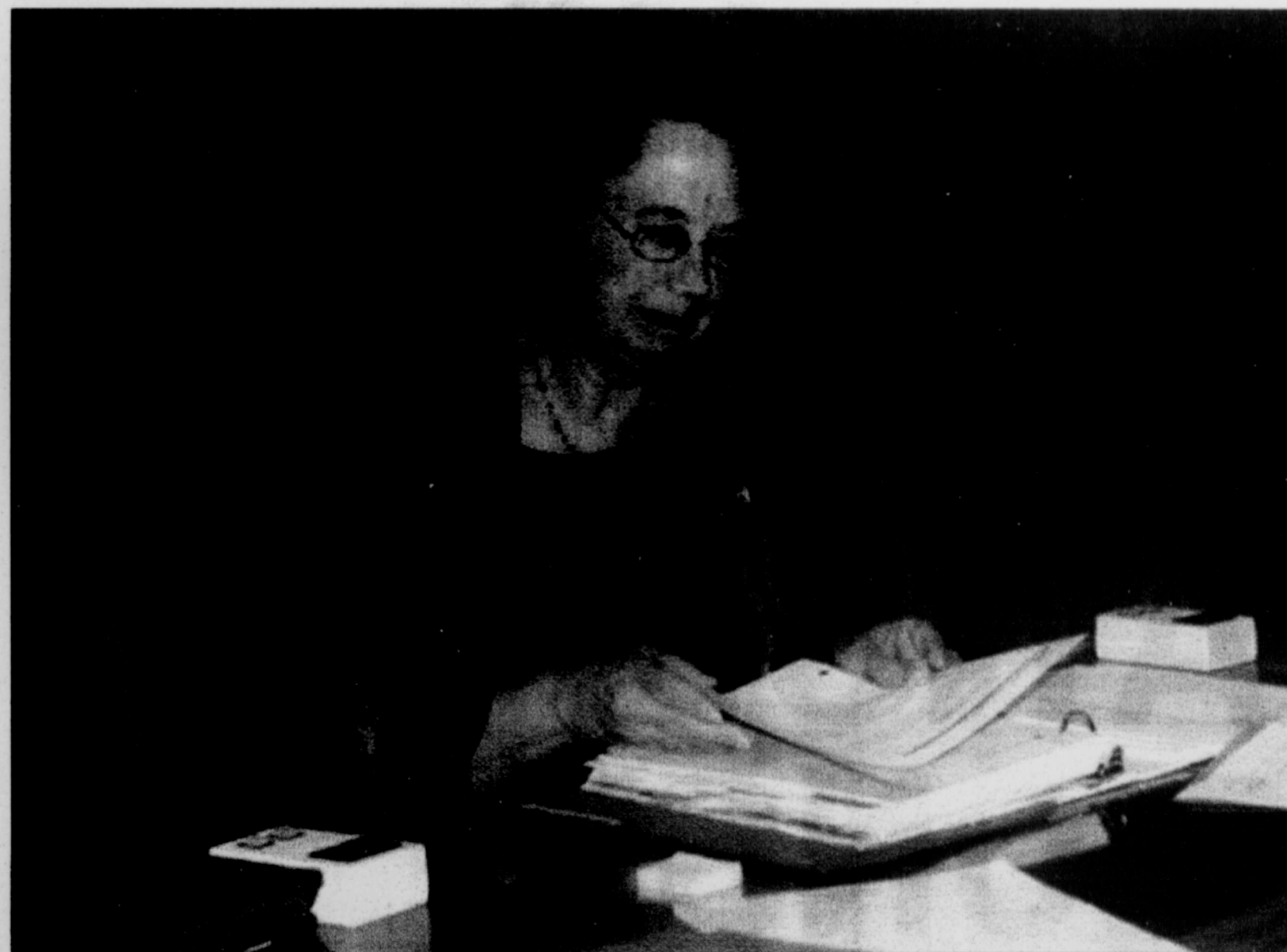
hours of parking downtown



2

new Cal Poly sweatshirts

Graphic by Amber Kiwan and Melissa Wong



ALICIA FREEMAN MUSTANG DAILY

"I think it's a good time to do it now rather than wait for some kind of failure in the future," San Luis Obispo Mayor Jan Marx said of plans to renovate City Hall. "It would be a great thing to do to celebrate the 60th anniversary of this building."

Bandaging the city budget

Josh Friedman

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The San Luis Obispo City Council has two months to overcome a projected \$4.4 million shortfall in the city general fund for the 2011-2012 fiscal year or be forced to operate on limited reserve money.

In advance of a June 21 deadline to adopt the 2011-2013 budget, which goes into effect July 1, the council must erase a deficit that grew from \$3 million in December to the current \$4.4 million mark in March.

Much of the growth in the budget gap can be attributed to plans to increase expenditures on operating programs by \$2 million and on capital improvement by \$1.5 million. Specifically, the capital improvement section of the budget includes \$1.7 million for street cleaning, \$350,000 for storm drain replacement and \$175,000 for open space acquisition.

To overcome these increases in expenditures, the council plans to cut spending, primarily by slashing city employee salaries.

A \$2.1 million reduction in salaries has already been proposed, but city council member Andrew Carter does not believe that is enough.

"Two point one million dollars is way too small and not nearly aggressive enough," Carter said. "The number I came up with was \$3.2 million."

Council member Kathy Smith agrees.

"I think the number 2.1 (million) is timid," Smith said. "We need to take a look at it being closer to 3.5."

Though spending cuts remain the focus of deficit reduction efforts, the council also opted to infuse a sizable total into the general fund by dipping into reserves.

Foregoing standard practice, the council decided to include the use of

see Budget, page 2



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Gas Prices

continued from page 1

demand and decreasing supply. Fisher said the growth of India and China is partly responsible for an increase in demand for oil. These two economies have grown exponentially larger than they were not too long ago, causing a huge spike in the global demand for oil. Meanwhile, some believe supply is going down. Although not everyone unanimously agrees, the International Energy Agency said the world has passed the point of "Peak Oil," meaning the maximum level of extraction and production has been reached, and from now on, production will decline.

Evans said this means oil prices will continue to rise and subsequent wars over oil will continue to intensify.

The second viewpoint is the polar opposite. According to Business Insider, demand is decreasing due to the high prices, among other reasons (Japan's decreasing economic growth rate, etc.). Business Insider was not the only source to state the market has an over-

abundance of oil supplies.

The U.S. Crude oil inventory has reported growth in the past year and Saudi Arabia's Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi said the market is oversupplied. With this point of view, the argument for supply and demand is not the sole factor behind high gas prices, which means economists must focus on other factors to define rising costs.

Value of the dollar

The dollar is the currency used to trade oil on the global market. When the value of the dollar falls, foreign currencies become more valuable in comparison. Other countries are then able to buy more oil than they regularly can, driving up the demand and increasing the price in dollars.

Unrest in the Middle East

Political instability and unrest in oil producing countries has the potential to interrupt regular oil production and exporting.

But, according to National Pub-

lic Radio, John Hofmeister, founder and CEO of the nonprofit group Citizens for Affordable Energy and former CEO of Shell Oil, the unrest in Libya, Syria and other Middle Eastern or North African countries has not actually had much of an impact on oil production yet. The fact that it has the potential to do so creates irrational fears, which drives up the market prices, via speculators, which leads to the last cause.

Speculation on commodity market

While some view this explanation as a result of the other three factors, others view it as an equal cause, and still others see it as the primary cause of increasing gas prices.

Regardless of the level of importance one places in the commodity market's impact, it's important to understand and is rarely explained in the mainstream media, probably due to the complexity of the matter.

Commodities can be bought and sold on a market, such as oil, wheat or soybeans. When the concept of the Commodity Index began as the idea of turning a commodity into a concept that can be bought and sold through Wall Street shares, it made sense.

"Speculators" were then introduced into this process. These figures served as a middleman to improve the buying and selling process. An example of this, from Harper's Magazine, is: if the corn producer had corn to sell, but no cereal companies needed corn at that time, the speculator would purchase the corn and hold onto it. Then,

(Speculators) are not at all interested in the things they buy, they just want to sell it later at a higher price.

— Herve Roche
Finance professor

when the cereal companies did need corn, if there were no corn producers selling again, they could buy the corn from the speculators at a similar price. The purpose of the speculators was to provide market liquidity, meaning that assets always had the ability to be sold for a reasonable price. Speculators were originally supposed to be actors keeping the markets healthy and for this reason, had certain strict limitations placed on them.

Goldman Sachs, the global investment banking firm, created a loophole in these limitations on speculators. This gave speculators new powers and now instead of creating market liquidity, they could do the opposite: hoarding.

Speculators purchase huge amounts of oil for the sole purpose of selling it for a much higher price.

"Speculators are not contributing to society," Roche said. "They are not at all interested in the things they buy, they just want to sell it later at a higher price."

The entire process is then driven and intensified by the three other

factors listed above. Roche used the example of trying to sell a used piece of paper.

"If someone tries to sell you a piece of paper, how much would you pay?" Roche said. "Five cents? What would motivate you to pay more for it? What if the seller told you they would sell it to you for \$5, and also give you the name of someone they knew would then pay you \$10 for it. Would you buy it for \$5?"

Roche said the only reason the next person is willing to pay \$10 is because they know someone who will pay \$20 — and the only reason that person is willing to pay \$20 is because they know someone who will pay more.

"They don't care about the use of the paper, but only the fact that they think someone else will pay more for it," Roche said. "A spiral starts and that's how prices rise."

President Obama recently created the Oil and Gas Price Fraud Working Group, to investigate the possibility that the oil markets are being manipulated in this way.

If someone tries to sell you a piece of paper, how much would you pay? Would you buy it for \$5?

— Herve Roche
Finance professor

Budget

continued from page 1

a one-time \$1.6 million reserve to ease the spending cuts and advancement of various city projects.

Continuous spending on "pet" projects, however, is creating concern about long-term durability of the city budget. Currently, two projects receiving significant attention are City Hall renovation and Laguna Lake dredging. Despite the present shortfall, the council is prepared to spend at least \$100,000 on refurbishing the City Hall steps.

Mayor Jan Marx is adamant about doing so.

"When we had this recent rainy period, about 4 to 5 days afterward

water was leaking through those steps," Marx said. "I think it's a good time to do it now rather than wait for some kind of failure of those steps in the future."

Marx also said renovating the steps will demonstrate civic pride.

"It would be a great thing to do to celebrate the 60th anniversary of this building," Marx said.

Vice mayor John Ashbaugh said he supports not only rebuilding the steps, but also an overall redesign of City Hall including a landscape plan for the City Hall plaza and modified entrances to both levels of the building.

"The opportunity should not be limited just to a replacement of our steps," Ashbaugh said. "I would like to see us spend ... for a comprehensive redesign of our entrance, which may include wheelchair access from Osos Street."

Ashbaugh said he supports a plan to spend close to \$6 million during the next five years on dredging Laguna Lake. Dredging is required to prevent an eventual transformation from lake to swamp due to increasing buildup of sediments underneath the water.

Though this project may require residents surrounding the lake to raise a significant portion of that cost, the council wants to proceed with the dredging, Ashbaugh said.

Council member Dan Carpenter said he is fairly supportive of dredging Laguna Lake, but his concerns about excess spending and budget sustainability are mounting.

Carpenter said he acknowledges the possibility of the termination of Measure Y, the half-cent sales tax, as well as the chance of reduction in city employee concessions due to

binding arbitration.

"I really want to look further down the line than one or two or five years (because of) this unfunded liability we're going to have to face," Carpenter said. "We've got to have some sort of contingency plan in place."

Carpenter, who said he consid-

ers himself a fiscal conservative, does not approve of the developing trend of placing biyearly "Band-Aids" on a broken budget process.

"If we just try to close the gap every two years, how are we ever going to address the big picture down the line?" Carpenter said.

I want to look further down the line than one or two or five years. We've got to have some sort of contingency plan in place.

— Dan Carpenter
San Luis Obispo City Council member

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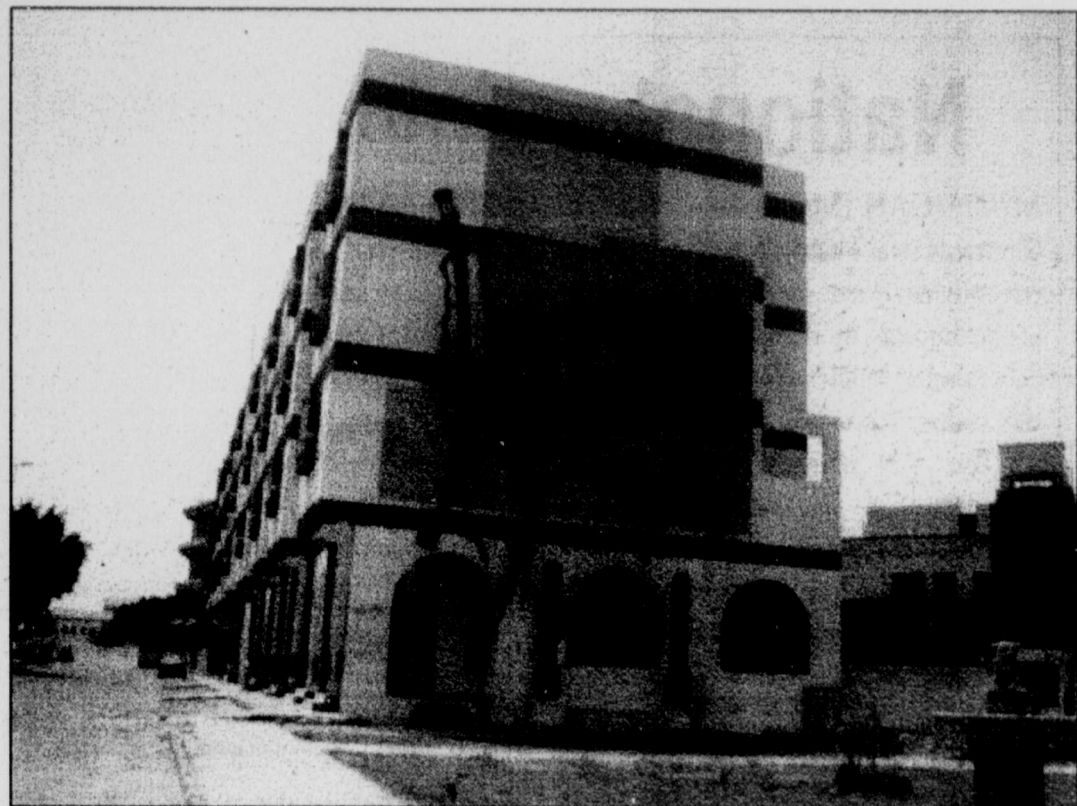
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Libyan rebels nearly drive all Gadhafi forces out of key port city



MCCLATCHY-TRIBUNE

Rebels focused on expelling loyalist troops from the city of Misrata Saturday, cutting off supplies to weaken the pro-Gadhafi forces.

Ned Parker

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Rebel fighters drove Moammar Gadhafi's loyalist forces from all but one base in Misrata on Saturday and appeared to be on the verge of expelling all government forces from the besieged port city.

After furious street fighting, Gadhafi's troops abandoned a college and vegetable market that had been hubs for shelling the city. At least 24 rebel fighters were killed and an additional 70 wounded, doctors at Misrata's Hikma hospital said.

But even if rebels push all of Gadhafi's fighters from the city,

Misrata remains surrounded by the Libyan leader's security units. The government could bomb the city from its gates if NATO is not effective in cutting off Gadhafi's supply lines.

To evade NATO attacks, Gadhafi has used civilian cars to transport troops and supplies over open roads, but rebels believe that NATO bombing runs have weakened Gadhafi's forces outside the city.

The battles on Saturday marked the culmination of the rebel fighters' strategy over the last month. They had sealed off Tripoli Street, the main commercial artery in Misrata, with sand-filled trucks to isolate Gadhafi's fighters and starve

them of supplies.

The strategy produced dividends as fighters first abandoned Tripoli Street's Tamim Life Insurance building Thursday. The Tamim building had been used to shower rockets, mortar rounds, gunfire and cluster bombs on central Misrata.

The port city rose up against Gadhafi as part of a popular revolt in mid-February and has become a symbol of the struggle against the Libyan leader.

Early Saturday, government fighters quit the city's vegetable market and regrouped at the old main hospital, which had been closed for renovations before the uprising began. At least 39 pro-Gadhafi fighters were killed in the fighting, a doctor said.

Rebel fighters also drove Gadhafi's troops from the city's Technical Institute.

As evening fell Saturday, government forces were on the defensive at the old hospital. A rebel fighter, Akram Hamid, said it was feared Gadhafi's men were using human shields at the medical complex, located on Tripoli Street.

At Hikma hospital, meanwhile, at least two Gadhafi soldiers who were being treated gave accounts of poor morale after troops had practically run out of food and medical supplies. Others told doctors that their commanders had deserted them, saying they were going for ammunition and never coming back.

A rebel was cheered at Hikma hospital after he brought in a Gadhafi fighter he claimed had been

shot in the leg by his commander when he refused to fight.

The Hikma hospital was pushed to the limit by the number of wounded on Saturday. A man with both his legs blown off was rushed to the emergency room but died on the operating table. Relatives hugged the bodies of dead fighters, some of them wrapped in pre-Gadhafi Libyan flags. A screaming little girl, who was wounded by a mortar blast, had shrapnel pulled from her forehead as her terrified parents watched.

The sight of newly liberated neighborhoods in Misrata was eerie. Until the day before, they had been occupied by Gadhafi's paramilitary forces. Outside the Technical Institute in eastern Misrata, buildings were burned and scarred by bullets. At one spot, rebels dug up two of their dead — they had been executed, their comrades said. The rebels shot their guns in the air as they loaded the bodies into a truck to take to the hospital.

In the courtyard of an apartment complex, a charred tank was

on its side. There were sticks of explosives and unfinished bowls of rice left behind in many of the apartments and homes.

Hamid, the rebel, bragged that Gadhafi's forces had been taught a lesson since fighting broke out.

"They have suffered in Misrata," Hamid said. "God willing, this is almost over. They will be out of the city."

The Libyan deputy foreign minister, Khaled Kaim, said late Friday that NATO airstrikes had taken their toll on Gadhafi's forces. His comments came after the United States announced the start of Predator drone operations to help the North Atlantic Treaty Organization effort. Kaim said the government now intends to let local tribesmen deal with Misrata.

Fighters like Hamid doubted the Tripoli government could mobilize tribes against them, but he still worried about Gadhafi's next step.

"Gadhafi might have some other plans," Hamid said. "I've heard he is preparing more Grad rocket trucks from south Libya."

**They have suffered in Misrata.
God willing, this is almost over.
They will be out of the city.**

— Hamid

Libyan rebel



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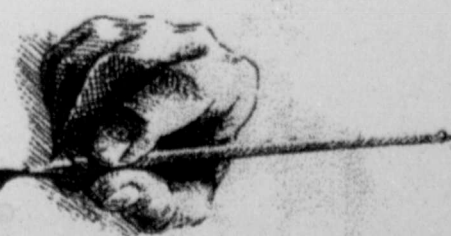
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St. Louis tornado worst regional storm in decades

Jennifer Mann

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

The National Weather Service reports the storm that ripped through the St. Louis region Friday was the worst it has seen in more than 40 years.

The last time the area saw such severe and widespread damage was on Jan. 24, 1967, when a tornado traveled 21 miles across St. Louis County following an eerily similar path.

That was the fourth-worst tornado in history to hit the St. Louis metropolitan area, according to the weather service.

"People are going to remember this for a long time," said Jim Sieveking, the lead forecaster at the National Weather Service in St. Louis.

A storm path producing tornadoes on Friday traveled from Maryland Heights all the way across the Mississippi River to Granite City, leaving destroyed homes, fallen trees and downed wires in its wake.

Its path was only about five to 10 miles off from the tornado of 1967, Sieveking said.

Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, smack in the middle of that path, was hit hard, losing part of its roof and seeing its windows shattered throughout the main terminal. There were multiple injuries, none serious. The airport closed down and officials are working to have it reopened by Sunday.

The weather service has confirmed tornadoes touched down in New Melle, Maryland Heights and Granite City. Survey teams are out inspecting the damage, to confirm suspected tornadoes elsewhere along that storm route.

Sieveking said they will be looking for the telltale signs: convergent patterns in the damage, twisting and turning of the tree limbs, houses removed from their foundations.

He said forecasters are confident the tornado touched down in Maryland Heights, Bridgeton and Edmundson because at those points they were picking up on their weather radars the debris swirling through the tornadoes.

This storm was far worse than the one that hammered Sunset Hills on New Year's Eve, he said. The tornadoes then were from a squall line thunderstorm. Squall lines are famous for their damaging winds but don't usually produce tornadoes — and when they do, they are short-lived, he said.

Friday was a supercell thunderstorm, known for producing long-path tornadoes, hail and damaging winds.

The 1967 storm first touched down in Chesterfield and headed northeast at 40 miles per hour. It was on the ground for 35 minutes, according to the weather service, and left a path of destruction between 50 to 200 yards wide.

There were 216 injuries and three fatalities. Property damage was significant, with 168 homes destroyed, 258 with major damage, and 1485 with minor damage. At least 600 businesses were damaged or destroyed, the weather service reported.

The total damage was estimated to be around \$15 million.

Forecasters at the weather service say the region may be at risk for more tornadoes Monday afternoon and evening, when a severe storm system is expected to move back in. Until then, the rain will continue, which has officials worried about flash floods.

"The biggest threat over the next 24 to 48 hours is just how much has fallen," Sieveking said.

"Almost all the rivers are either in flood stage or they're going to reach flood stage just due to the rainfall we've received so far," he said. "You receive additional rainfall and that would just push the crest of the river higher."

State

SACRAMENTO (MCT) —

A California congresswoman Friday called for an investigation into the actions of federal immigration officials, saying they lied about whether counties and states had the right to opt out of a controversial nationwide enforcement program that screens for illegal immigrants in local jails.

The so-called Secure Communities program, launched in 2008, was promoted to local and state leaders as a way to focus enforcement efforts on "serious convicted criminals." But the program, which uses fingerprint data, has come under fire because it has ensnared a high proportion of immigrants who have never been charged with a crime or who have been charged with minor infractions.

Critics say it discourages illegal immigrants from reporting crimes and opens the door to racial profiling.

...

VENTURA (MCT) —

Prosecutors in Ventura County will review nearly 300 drunken-driving cases because of problems with a type of breathalyzer used by agencies throughout the county since January.

"Out of an abundance of caution, we've suspended doing anything with cases involving these machines," Deputy District Attorney Michael Frawley said last week.

Frawley said an unknown number of pending cases would be dropped. In 157 of the cases that will be reviewed, defendants have pleaded guilty or no contest.

"It stands to reason," Frawley said, "that there will be some cases where this was the primary piece of evidence."

But in many arrests, the handheld Alco-Sensor V was only a "preliminary screening device," with other tests used to derive blood-alcohol readings, he said.

Defense attorney Darryl Genis said the problem with the devices, acquired with the aid of a state grant, was more systemic than acknowledged by county officials, who said erratic readings had been spotted in only a handful of machines.

Briefs

National

MICHIGAN (MCT) —

Controversial Pastor Terry Jones accidentally fired his .40-caliber handgun while he was in the parking lot of a Southfield, Mich., TV studio Thursday night, according to police.

The 59-year-old Florida pastor was getting in the passenger side of his car at 11:10 p.m. after an interview when the Taurus handgun fired, sending a bullet into the floorboard, Southfield Police Lt. Nick Loussia said Friday.

"Officers heard a gunshot, approached the vehicle, asked Mr. Jones if he was OK," Loussia said.

Officers took the gun and also found another gun near the 42-year-old driver. Both men were carrying valid Florida concealed weapon licenses, which are recognized in Michigan, Loussia said.

"It did not appear a crime had been committed," Loussia said, explaining that officers returned the weapons and sent the men on their way. As he entered a Dearborn, Mich., courtroom Friday, Jones told reporters that he had been up since 4:30 a.m. and firing his gun was "an accident."

...

WASHINGTON D.C. (MCT) —

The Senate Ethics Committee's investigation into Sen. John Ensign's conduct related to his affair with a campaign aide will continue despite his decision to resign, the panel's leaders say.

In a terse statement, chairwoman Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., and ranking member Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., said Ensign "made the appropriate decision" to step down, but they signaled the decision limits but does not end their probe.

"The Senate Ethics Committee has worked diligently for 22 months on this matter and will complete its work in a timely fashion," the senators said.

Ensign's resignation takes effect on May 3, when the Senate is set to return from a two-week recess. On Friday, Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval, a Republican, said that he would appoint a new senator before then, while calling initial speculation about whom it would be "premature."

International

IRELAND (MCT) —

Police in Northern Ireland on Sunday said they found bomb-making equipment in south Armagh. The discovery on Saturday night came after several weapons caches, which police think belonged to dissident republican groups, were uncovered in the county.

On Friday, police seized weapons and explosives from a storage facility in Omagh and arrested three men. A policeman was killed in a bomb attack in the area three weeks ago.

Northern Ireland went on full terrorist alert at the start of the Easter weekend, the anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising against British rule. Authorities also fear dissidents now have the capacity to carry out attacks on the British mainland.

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ISRAEL (MCT) —

An Israeli man was killed and three other people were wounded Sunday when a Palestinian security officer opened fire on a convoy of ultra-Orthodox Jewish worshippers who had entered a religious site in a Palestinian-administered area without permission and then ignored orders to stop, Israeli and Palestinian officials said.

The Jewish worshippers were attempting to make an unauthorized predawn pilgrimage to Joseph's Tomb, located in the West Bank city of Nablus.

The incident threatened to further heighten tensions in the West Bank between Jewish settlers and Palestinians. In the hours after the shooting, Palestinian youths clashed briefly with Israeli soldiers, who moved into the area to protect the tomb.

Preliminary reports suggest that Palestinian security officials fired warning shots in an attempt to stop the car after observing what they called "suspicious activity." They said the group — including about 15 people in three cars — ignored calls to stop and tried to evade roadblocks. According to some Palestinian reports, the settlers were armed.



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— Marc Augustine, computer engineering freshman



"It looks like there's been progress. It's a little inconvenient that some places are blocked off. It's a little bit of an eyesore, but I'm sure it will look good when it's done."

— Samantha Plete, landscape architecture freshman



"They've been working ever since I've been here. It just seems like there's a lot of it. Once they finish something there's something else."

— Courtney Eynck, liberal studies senior



"I think it's going all right. I hope they could get the gym done faster."

— Erat Ko, biomedical engineering senior



"It's going pretty fast. I don't think it's going to be a problem, but I think it'll be a good addition to the school for future students."

— Alan Garcia, landscape architecture junior



"I think it's going pretty fast. I don't think it's going to be a problem, but I think it'll be a good addition to the school for future students."

— James Robertson, business administration freshman

Voters say state government should give up benefits to support California economy

Shane Goldmacher
LOS ANGELES TIMES

California voters want government employees to give up some retirement benefits to help ease the state's financial problems, favoring a cap on pensions and a later age for collecting them, according to a new poll.

Voter support for rolling back benefits available to few outside the public sector comes as Gov. Jerry Brown and Republicans in the Legislature haggle over changes to the pension system as part of state budget negotiations. Such benefits have been a flashpoint of national debate this year, and the poll shows that Californians are among those who perceive public retirement plans to be too costly.

Voters appear ready to embrace changes not just for future hires but also for current employees who have been promised the benefits under contract.

Seventy percent of respondents said they supported a cap on pensions for current and future public employees. Nearly as many, 68 percent, approved of raising the amount of money government workers should be required to contribute to their retirement. Increasing the age at which government employees may collect pensions was favored by 52 percent.

Although pension costs today account for just a fraction of the state budget, they are putting local governments under considerable financial strain, and analysts say effects on the state may not be far off.

"It's pretty clear that there's broad support for making changes in the area of pensions," said Democratic pollster Stanley Greenberg, who co-directed the bipartisan poll for the Los Angeles Times and the Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences at the University of Southern California.

Many public safety officers can retire at 50 with a pension equal to 3 percent of their final salary for each year worked. Many other state employees can retire at 55, with 2.5 percent of salary for each year worked. And tens of thousands of public workers may purchase "air time" — credit for years they do not actually work — to boost their retirement income.

Guaranteed pensions have faded from corporate America in recent decades, replaced largely by 401(k) accounts that workers pay into and that rise and fall based on the fluctuations of financial markets. Voters back an integration of such plans into the government retirement system, with 66 percent supporting a blend of the traditional pension and a 401(k).

"It's just gotten way out of hand," said Beverly Marcelja, a 67-year-old Democrat and retiree living in Tracy, in California's Central Valley.

David Martinez, 59, a nonpartisan voter who lives in Rowland Heights, said existing retirement plans reflect a time when private-sector workers were afforded the same pensions.

"It's come to the point where the government is paying much more than private industry is," he said. "It should be equal."

The public sentiment is a cause for concern for organized labor. Public employee unions that spent millions of dollars helping to elect Brown are working aggressively to keep their pensions intact. But the governor has made clear that he believes they must make concessions as the state struggles.

Art Pulaski, executive secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation, said the public is trapped in a "moment of envy" over benefits that he maintains are far from lavish.

His union's position is that every worker should be entitled to a pension, not an unsecured retirement reliant on Wall Street earnings. Policymakers should focus on winning back a stable retirement for private-sector workers rather than demonize public employees, he said.

Some state and local public employee unions have already agreed to some changes, such as a delay in the retirement age for new hires.

"It's one thing for Republican governors in Wisconsin and Indiana to support these types of changes, but seeing this type of support from California voters, even California Democrats, is remarkable," said Dan Schnur, director of the Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics at USC and former GOP strategist.

Among Democratic respondents, 71 percent supported increasing retire-

ment contributions for future hires and 66 percent backed a pension cap for both current and future workers. However, fewer than half of the Democrats surveyed favored cutting benefits and raising the retirement age for current employees.

Majorities of Republican and nonpartisan voters favored every potential money-saving pension change they were asked about. Linda DiVall, a Republican pollster who co-directed the poll, said the results show that on the subject of retirement benefits, the public believes it is "unfair what the state employees have going for them."

Although Republicans have crusaded for years against what they view as bloated government pensions, California voters are not confident that they are best suited to tackle the issue. Only 29 percent said Republicans would best handle a revamping of the pension system, whereas 43 percent would prefer that an overhaul be left in the hands of Brown and his fellow Democrats.

And although voters strongly supported downsizing parts of the pension system, they were divided on whether most public employees were compensated appropriately. Forty-three percent said wages and benefits were too high; 33 percent said they were about right; 12 percent said they were too low.

The Times/USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences poll surveyed 1,503 registered voters from April 7 to 17. It was conducted by a bipartisan team of polling companies based in the Washington, D.C., area: Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, a Democratic firm, and American Viewpoint, a Republican firm.

The margin of error is plus or minus 2.53 percentage points. Some pension questions were posed to half the respondents and have a margin of error of plus or minus 3.58 percentage points.

It's pretty clear that there's broad support for making changes in the area of pensions.

— Stanley Greenberg
Democratic pollster

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Freshman takes on Open House

J.J. Jenkins is a journalism freshman and Mustang Daily freshman columnist.

What happened to my simple, quiet college town?

That is the question I asked my friends last weekend as thousands of Cal Poly alumni, parents and potential students descended upon San Luis Obispo for Open House.

Being from out of state, I never got the chance to experience the madness of Open House, and after seeing it first-hand, I'm kind of glad I didn't. The weekend is a showcase of all things Cal Poly and if you have a club you are already interested in, it's a perfect time to go talk to the members.

However, the plethora of booths means that the lower part of campus turns into a zoo and that is simply not my cup of tea. This time around, the chaos was unavoidable. Stuck on campus with little hope of leaving, I watched the invasion of what I consider my home by strangers.

In my view, a college campus is unique because of its youthfulness. At what other time in your life are you so consistently surrounded by people



your own age? Only seeing the occasional set of parents walking around campus reminds me that, yes, there are people in this world who do not think Tosh.0 is hilarious.

Yet, that changed Saturday as I set out for my daily run and started out on my normally peaceful jaunt through the horse unit and back toward the agricultural areas (I think I've become immune to the smell).

Usually seeing more than a couple

people was out of the ordinary, but this time I found myself ducking and dodging through throngs of people braving the heat and heading to the tractor pull.

On that note, what is the appeal of the tractor pull? To be fair, I have not seen this spectacle, though the various descriptions of the event combined with the deafening noise heard from my Cerro Vista apartment does not create something I'd pony up eight bucks for.

Thanks, but no thanks, I'll save that cash for a tri-tip sandwich from Firestone Grill, which will not poison my lungs for the day.

Narrowly avoiding running over multiple grandmothers sporting Cal Poly 1950 alumni pins, I returned to my apartment, cleaned up and made a quick trip to the booths of chaos. After spending about 20 minutes at

I saw the reason for our demise: food. ... Everything from tri-tip to Cal Poly-made milkshakes.

— J.J. Jenkins
Freshman columnist

see Freshman, page 8

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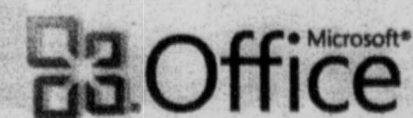
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Mel Gibson breaks silence

Christie D'Zurilla
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Mel Gibson, who's been essentially mum since tapes of him ranting at Oksana Grigorieva were leaked last summer, has finally broken his silence, referring to the recordings as "one terribly awful moment in time, said to one person, in the span of one day," and something that "doesn't represent what I truly believe or how I've treated people my entire life."

Gibson also said he didn't care if he ever acted again.

In the Deadline Hollywood interview, coming as the May release of "The Beaver" looms, Gibson expressed regret and anger at himself but also held his ground about what people heard.

"You have to put it all in the proper context of being in an irrationally heated discussion at the height of a breakdown, trying to get out of a really unhealthy relationship," he said.

The tapes, dramatically released one by one over the span of more than a week last July, eventually were revealed as having come from one day's continuing argument. He told Deadline that the tapes had been edited.

"You find out who your friends are," Gibson said, including Whoopi Goldberg ("I knew Whoopi before she was Whoopi ... I like her even more now, because she got it.") and "The Beaver" director Jodie Foster ("I'd give her a pedicure every day of the week if I could."), both of whom have spoken out on his behalf.

But he said he's not bothered by the short list of public defenders.

"Why would anyone want to speak publicly and drag themselves through this crap?" he noted. "It seems to add fuel to the fire."

Fans who hope to see Gibson on screen down the line can breathe easier — while the phrases "move on" and

"let it go" peppered his reaction to being awkwardly let go from "The Hangover II," he was enthusiastic about his upcoming project with "Braveheart" screenwriter Randy Wallace, in which he's "not the main guy."

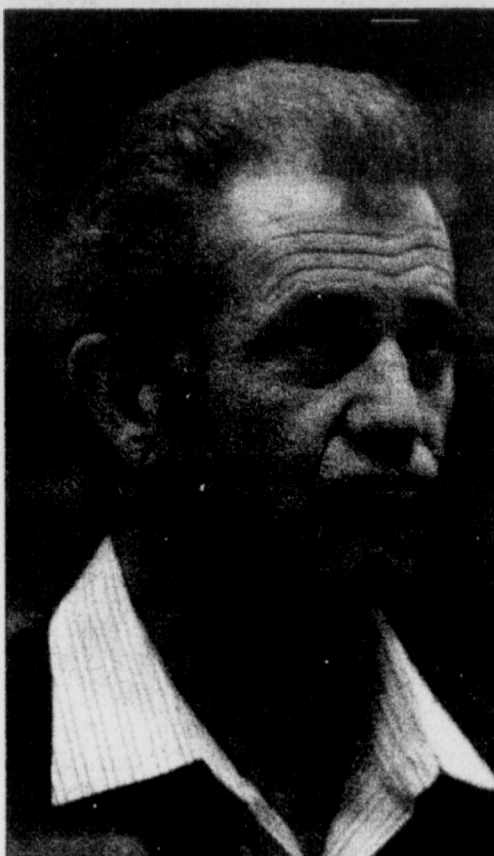
"It's total bodice-ripping, swash-buckling stuff, but it's funny," he said. "It's funny, and yet it's got really good serious undertones too."

About what has happened and what is still pending between him and ex-girlfriend Grigorieva and the legal system in the wake of his no-contest plea to a charge of misdemeanor domestic violence, the actor continued to have little to say.

"Even if the judge hadn't put some kind of court order on me, I think I'd stay mum on a lot of these things just out of consideration for Lucia and my other children and my grandchildren and friends and family. It doesn't do any good." Lucia is Gibson's 18-month-old daughter with Grigorieva.

"Maybe, when this is all over and, hopefully, justice is achieved. Maybe I could say something ... a lot of damage has been done. I don't want to add to it."

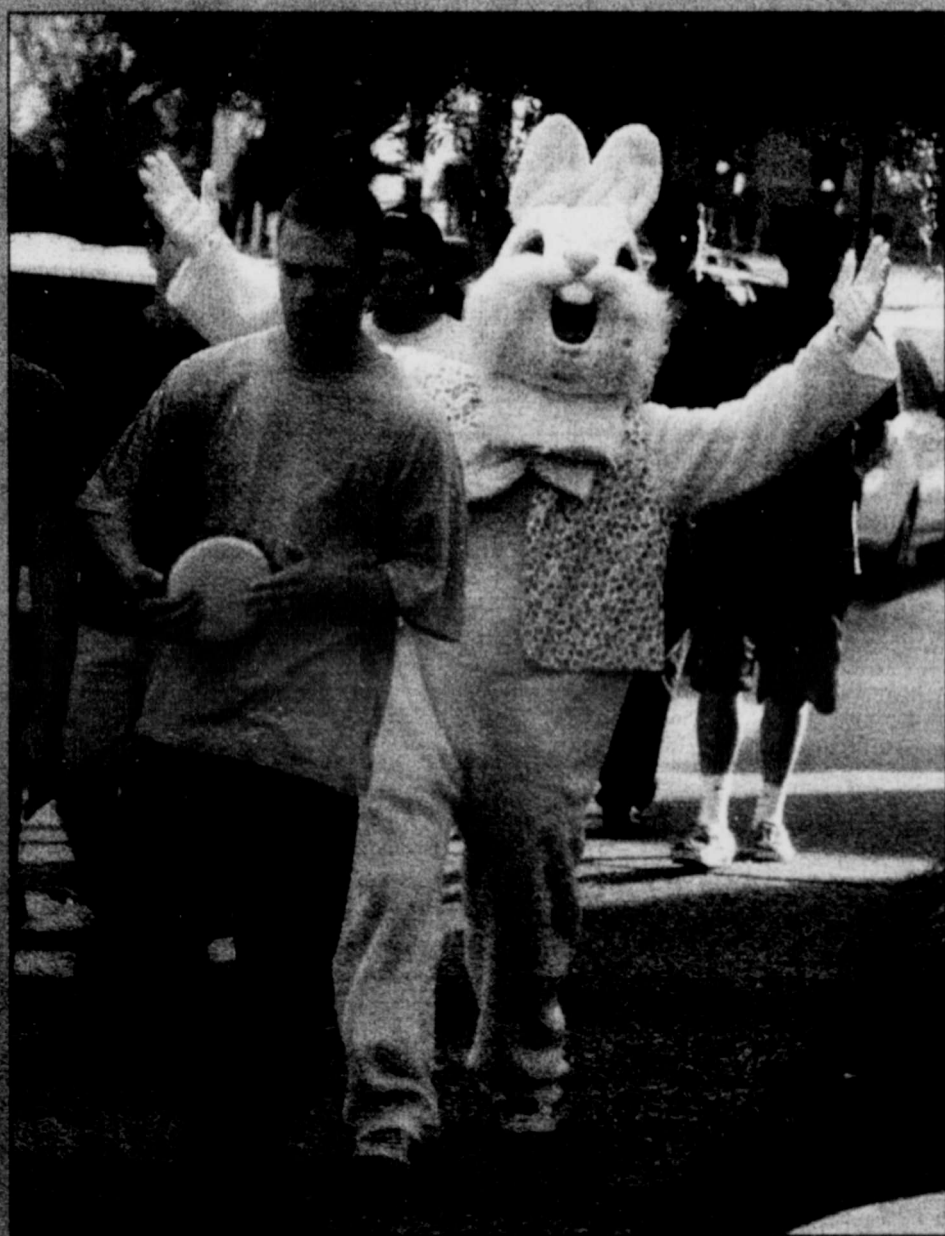
"The Beaver," filmed in 2009 before



MCCLATCHY-TRIBUNE

"You have to put it all in the proper context of being in an irrationally heated discussion at the height of a breakdown," Mel Gibson said of his infamous voicemails to Oksana Grigorieva.

the scandal broke, comes out on May 6 in L.A. and New York and on May 20 in wide release.



picture of the day
by Krishna Agatep

"Wabbit Season"

Freshman

continued from page 6

two separate club booths, where not one person came up and talked to us, I started to wonder if all the visitors simply looked at each group and moved on.

But then I saw the reason for our demise: food. Lines stretched through the streets for something as simple as a free snow cone (to be fair, it was blistering out). Everything from tri-tip to Cal Poly-made milkshakes brought throngs of prospective students to the agricultural booths.

Note to prospective students: enjoy the good food on campus while it lasts, I hope you did not decide to come to San Luis Obispo thinking the "aggies" cooked up stellar food on a daily basis for Campus Dining.

Having had enough of the Open House mania, I walked back to my dorm, closed the blinds and huddled under my covers in an at-

tempt to get away from it all.

Mercifully the sun dawned on Sunday and the flood of people finally began to trickle out of the Cal Poly campus. Do not get me wrong, it's important for students to see their future campus before they make a decision, but I believe Open House does not accurately represent what going to college here is like.

I would have advised students who came to "Polywood" to stick around until Monday, then take a tour and get an accurate pulse of what campus looks like when it is not overrun with middle-aged parents and overzealous alumni.

I admit, I'm too harsh on Open House. I should love that people who have not gone to school here in decades still keep a dear place in their heart for Cal Poly, but that is hard to see through the spectacle.

I'm sure I'll come around in about 30 years when I take my kids back to a place that has already gifted me with so many memories — but I'll end this column before I tear up.

HOROSCOPES

MONDAY, APRIL 25



Taurus

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) — You'll have the chance to impress your boss by being Johnny on the spot when things get dicey. You anticipate needs well.



Taurus



Gemini

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) — Your work is likely to bear many similarities to the work of a rival, but you can prove that yours is, indeed, original to you.



Gemini

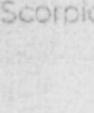


Cancer

CANCER (June 21-July 22) — Don't be impatient; your chance is just about to make itself apparent, but you don't want to show your hand just yet.



Cancer



Leo

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) — Your curiosity is likely to lead you into some danger, but you should be fully equipped to handle it with confidence, if not ease.



Leo



Virgo

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — Your mind will want to explore all manner of unusual ideas, but you must be sure to rein in your thoughts and stay on track.

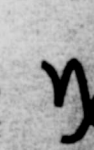


Virgo

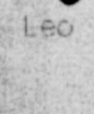


Libra

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) — You may not be able to say yes to an offer that comes your way, but those who want to work with you are not likely to give up just yet.

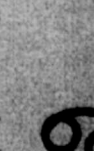


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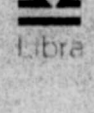


Scorpio

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) — Focus on what you think during waking hours, not when you are dreaming. Dreams can be illuminating, but not necessarily.



Scorpio

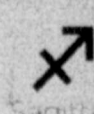


Sagittarius

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) — You're going to want to keep your judgments to yourself, for reasons that will soon become quite clear.

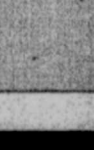


Sagittarius

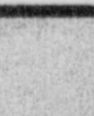


Capricorn

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — It's time to change how you think about certain issues. Clearly, others are in the right — and it's time for you to jump onboard.



Capricorn



Aquarius

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) — It's a good day to experiment with how you deal with people when you first meet them; you don't always have to behave the same way.



Aquarius

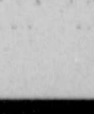


Pisces

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) — Others are trying to make you conform to their way of thinking, but you may find it impossible given certain fundamental differences.



Pisces



Aries

ARIES (March 21-April 19) — Someone may be quite stubborn about not giving in to your demands, but he or she is likely to come around if you play your cards right.



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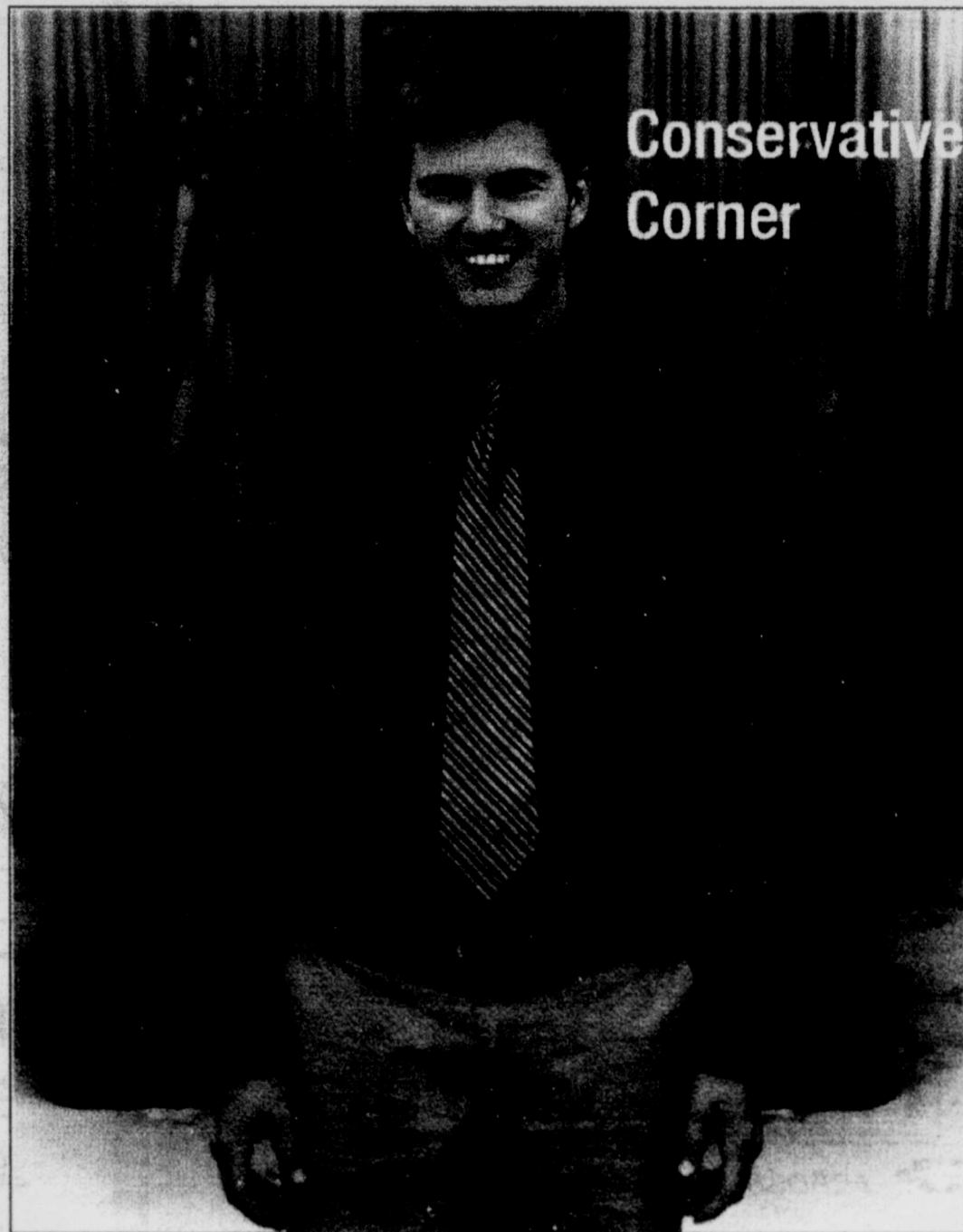


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Donald Trump unlikely candidate for GOP



Conservative Corner

Andrew Nenow is a wine and viticulture sophomore and Mustang Daily conservative columnist.

As President Obama approaches the last year of his term, there is a lot of focus on who will run against him in 2012. Among the candidates are household political names such as Mitt Romney, Mike Huckabee, Sarah Palin and Ron Paul.

But within this list there is one candidate that seems a bit out of the ordinary: Donald Trump. Without a doubt he's a popular person, but is

he really being considered to be President of the United States?

As the CEO of the Trump Organization, a real estate developer, Trump has built a business empire that trumps (pun intended) the success of any other American businessman. With more than 14 Trump towers worldwide he is one of the most recognized names in the business.

His net worth is a staggering \$2.7 billion, putting him toward the top of Forbes list of richest people in the world. So he has been insanely successful and is obviously

doing something right.

The reason Trump has gained so much support is because a lot of people feel the United States should be run like a large business, and who better than the master businessman? Who better than the man who understands how to run a large company through a struggling economy?

In light of all this, it's no wonder Donald Trump is now a GOP front-runner, but I believe people are overlooking many things. While everything looks good on paper, there is a lot to consider with a businessman of his kind.

In the end, his fame, fortune and success in general do not say anything about who Donald Trump is as a person. Say all you want, but as interested as people say they are in a candidate's politics, they are twice as interested in their character.

I do not think anyone can deny that Obama's popularity during the 2008 election stemmed from his fantastic speaking skills and family orientation. Another example is the frenzy people created over the small fact that Obama was a smoker. Something completely unrelated to politics.

So now we put Donald Trump under the microscope. In the end Trump is nothing but a large ego.

Watch any of his shows, read any article or book about him and in the end he is all about the dollars and cents. The future of this country cannot be entrusted to a man with that type of mind complex.

Being a celebrity has only inflated his ego, which is a very dangerous quality for a person in power. To me it would seem that voters have a myriad of better options than a celebrity.

The last celebrity to be president, Ronald Reagan, had great success and is even considered by many to be one of the best presidents of all time. This offers hope that Trump could be successful as well, but there are many differences between the two stars.

Donald Trump has no past experience in politics and seems to have been hurled into the conversation of president while Ronald Reagan bred himself to become president. Reagan actually ran for president twice and failed before he successfully won over the American people.

This American fears that if people elect Donald Trump to be the leader of this great nation they will not fully understand the ins and outs of his politics. I am not sure if I will ever be able to get past the greed of a person like Trump and would be very concerned with him leading us.

In the end, Donald Trump is nothing but a large ego. ... and in the end he is all about the dollars and cents.

— Andrew Nenow
Conservative columnist



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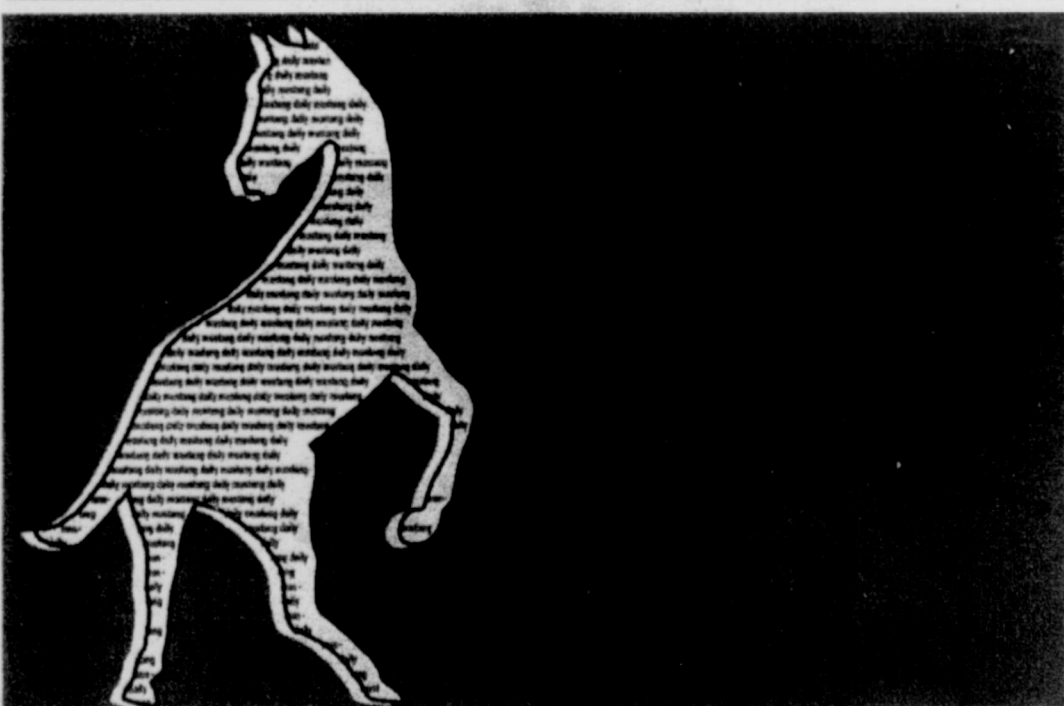
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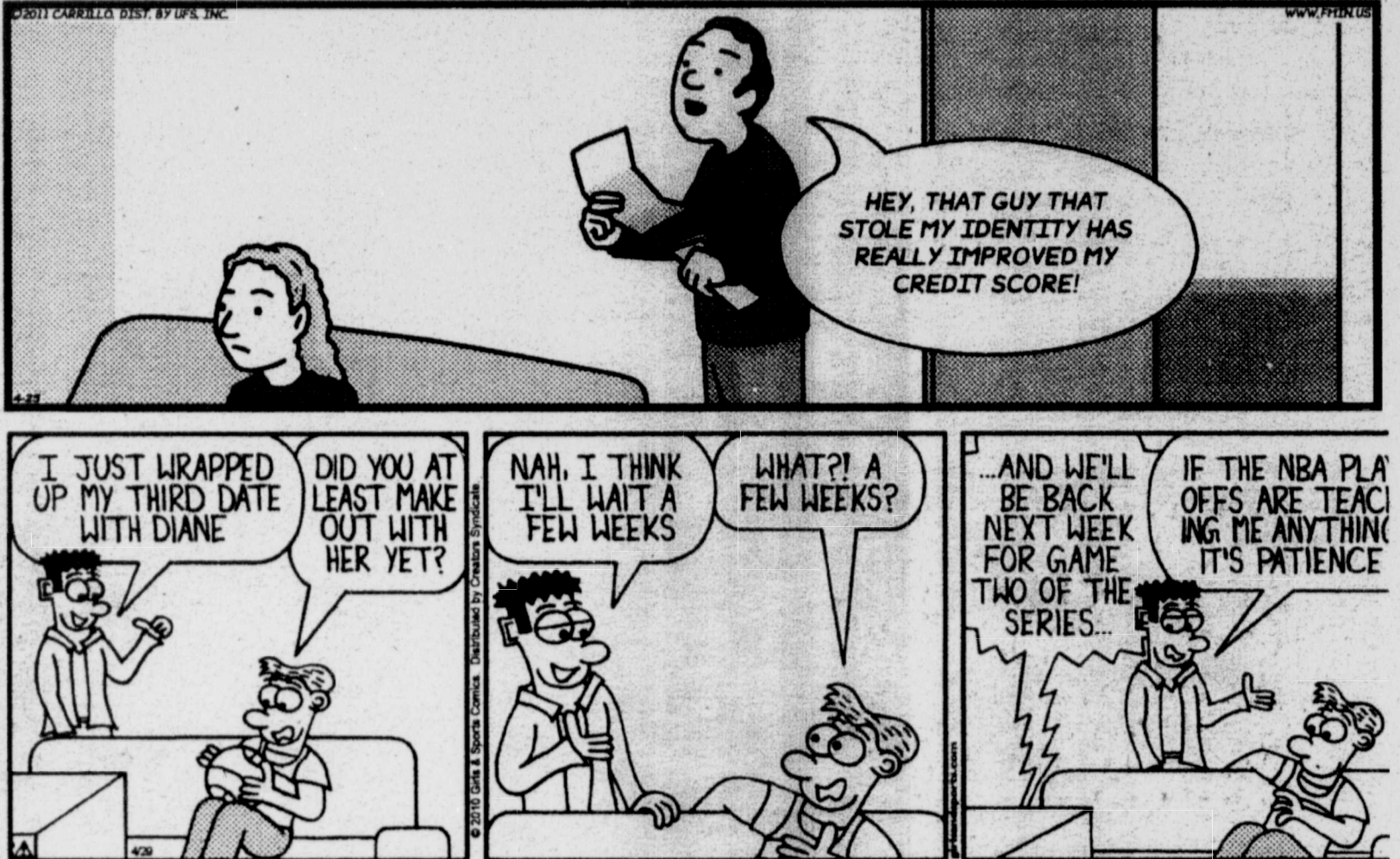
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- 50 Mecca resident
- 52 Suffers from
- 55 Daydream
- 56 Pervading mood
- 58 LEM lander
- 59 Fictional whale — Dick
- 60 Tannin source
- 61 Distort, as facts
- 62 Low cards
- 63 Bare

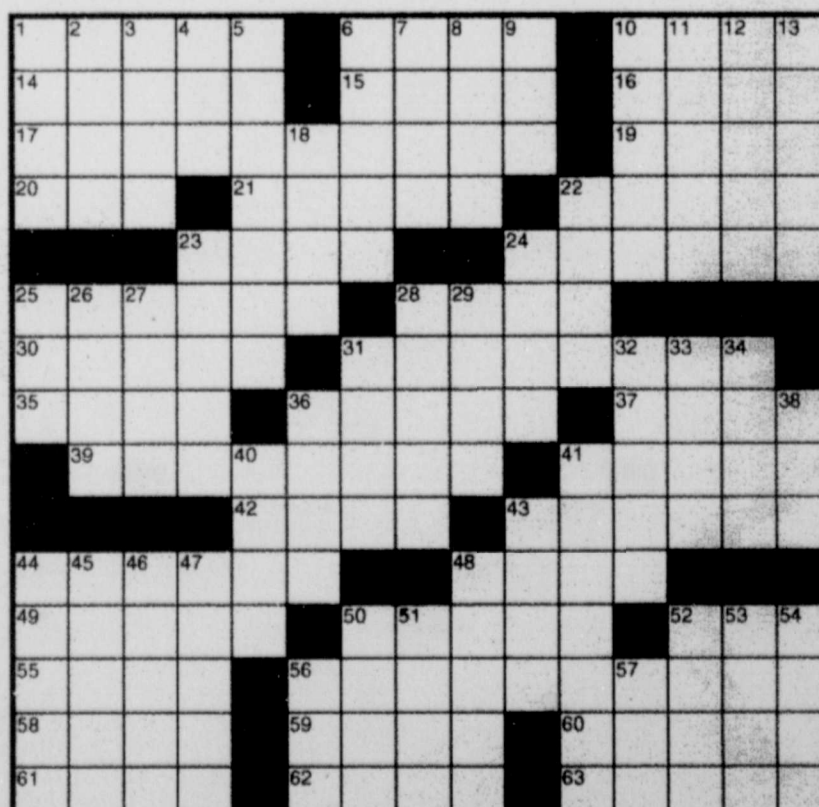
DOWN

- 1 Relocate
- 2 Zero-shaped
- 3 Unwritten promise
- 4 Yale athlete
- 5 Semi engines
- 6 Recipe direction
- 7 Ciao, to the queen (hyph.)
- 8 Disney CEO Bob
- 9 Flaming
- 10 Met celebs
- 11 Law
- 12 Groovy!
- 13 Prey grabber
- 18 Soccer announcer's shout
- 22 Feudal estate
- 23 Army doc
- 24 Subatomic particle
- 25 Resistance unit
- 26 — my lips!
- 27 Kind of earner
- 28 — we all!
- 29 Mutual-fund charge
- 31 Scheme
- 32 Steel girder (hyph.)
- 33 Techie
- 34 Oprah's middle name
- 36 Clarified butter
- 38 Tunis pasha
- 40 Wavy-bladed dagger
- 41 Orbital path
- 43 Traipses about
- 44 Looks bored
- 45 Boat made of skins
- 46 Out-of-date
- 47 Baloney!
- 48 Keeps from sinking
- 50 Put away
- 51 Lactern
- 52 Fiber plant
- 53 What the suspicious smell is (2 wds.)
- 54 Office asst.
- 56 Lb. or tsp.
- 57 Whir

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

BOCK	LAMAS	LEFT
ANON	ALERT	AXLE
GURU	NINNY	DEAN
SECEDED	WICKS	
KAHN	LEAD	
SALVO	COMRADES	
LEVEE	GLOMS	YDS
OVID	QUOTA	FLIT
TEL	SUITS	LOAFS
SNAPPISH	TINNY	
LOPE	RAND	
VALET	TICKLED	
OXEN	ABACK	IVAN
WENT	FARCE	NEMO
SLAY	RAPID	GREW

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SUDOKU

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3				9		7		



"I don't know, Igor... it seems kind of sacrilegious to do this around Easter."

Baseball

continued from page 12

tangs turned everything around, but the ability for Cal Poly's hitters and pitchers to get hot at the same time has placed the team in a position to win the conference.

"It feels like the first part of the season never happened," Thompson said. "We're the best team I've ever seen."

Fischback also threw seven strikeouts, including two in the first inning, using what Lee said is his best pitch: the change-up.

However, starting pitching was not quite as solid Saturday, as Chase Johnson was pulled in the fourth inning after giving up three earned runs.

It didn't matter who was pitching, Cal State Fullerton was still able to put up crooked numbers against the entire Cal Poly pitching staff, scoring three runs in the sixth and two more in the seventh. Most of the power came off the bat of Ramirez, who belted two

home runs to deep right center.

But some of the worst news the Mustangs received on Saturday was not from the scoreboard. Injuries to center fielder Bobby Crocker and Chavez caused Lee to pull them from the game as a preventative measure. Crocker tweaked his right hamstring in the first inning while running the bases and was pulled soon after.

"My hamstring was cramping a bit and, at most, it's a slight strain," Crocker said. "I'll just rehab this week and I should be ready by (next weekend at) Long Beach."

For Lee, these injuries couldn't have come at a worse time.

"The thing that's going to hold us back is the number of injuries we continue to have," Lee said. "We'll see the status of Crocker and Chavez as the week progresses."

Aside from those two, Cal Poly will also have to deal with the loss of Mike Miller, who is out for the foreseeable future with mononucleosis (mono). However, despite the multiple losses,

closer Jeff Johnson is expected to be ready next week.

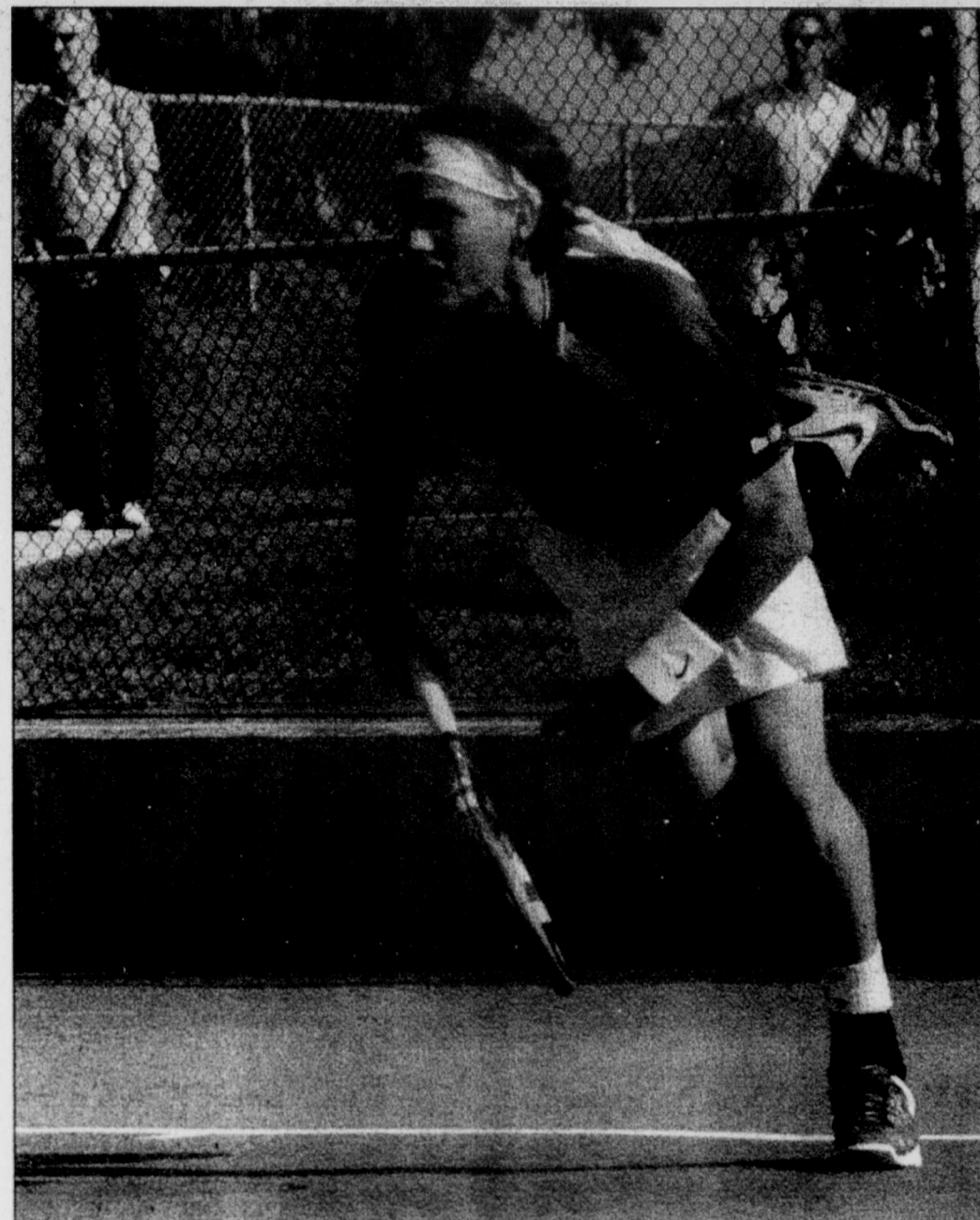
The key to the Mustangs' recent success has come down to timely hitting, as the entire team has begun to find their groove coming into Big West play. During their seven game winning streak, the Mustangs averaged more than six runs a game, while giving up only two and a half.

"This year is definitely special," Thompson said. "Especially with the hitting and (the pitching staff) doing what they've been doing and carrying us for awhile."

The Mustangs go on the road for the next two weekends where they will face Long Beach State and UC Irvine. The team is just 3-9 on the road this year, but third baseman Evan Busby said he is hardly concerned.

"At the beginning of the year, we weren't playing well no matter where we went," Busby said. "Now, we've gotten on our roll, so it won't matter (where we play)."

Men's tennis falls to UCI in season finale



RYAN SIDARTO MUSTANG DAILY FILE PHOTO

A season full of win streaks ended on a losing note, as the Mustangs lost to UC Irvine 5-2 Saturday, ending Cal Poly's season short of a Big West regular season title and undefeated conference record. The Mustangs won the doubles point, but took just one matchup in singles play. Cal Poly did, however, claim the No. 2 seed in the Big West Tournament, which starts Thursday, earning them a bye.

Softball

continued from page 12

through the left side and, in the seventh, she grounded to the pitcher, but allowed Sarah Carrasco to score from third to take the lead.

They wouldn't falter down the stretch.

The second game wasn't as close. Anna Cahn started the game and went 4 2/3 innings and gave up four earned runs off nine hits.

Trista Thomas came on in relief. She pitched the rest of the game and gave up three earned runs off four hits.

At the plate, the Mustangs couldn't match the 49ers. Cahn nailed a solo shot to right in the seventh — the Mustangs' only run — but it was already too late to mount a comeback.

Long Beach State pieced together two runs off two RBI hits, then Karli Sandoval hit a two-run home run to right center to cap a four-run

rally in the fifth.

It got even worse. The 49ers added a two-run sixth and a one-run seventh to take the 7-1 win.

It sends the Mustangs home as losers of two of three games, but the win in the finale snaps the Mustangs' eight game losing streak as they head further into their conference schedule.

Next weekend Cal Poly will travel south to take on Cal State Northridge in a three-game conference series.

THIS WEEK IN CAL POLY ATHLETICS

BASEBALL SERIES

Thursday - 6:00 PM

Friday - 6:00 PM

Saturday - 1 PM

CAL POLY
BASEBALL

vs.



Baseball

#8 Cal State Fullerton

SOFTBALL SERIES

*Friday - 12:00 PM

Saturday - 12:00 PM

CAL POLY
SOFTBALL

vs.

Beach

Softball

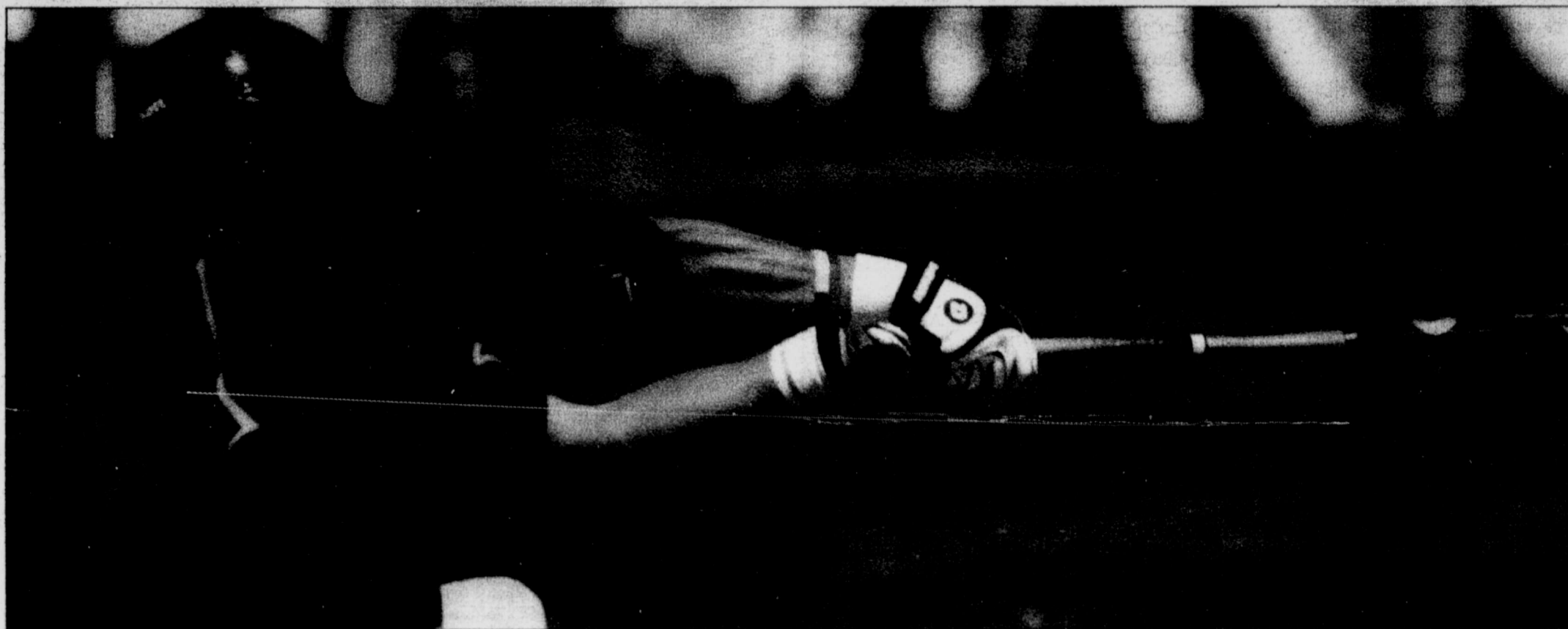
Long Beach State

*Doubleheader

Admission is FREE for all Cal Poly Students
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WE ARE THE MUSTANGS

WEEKEND ROUND-UP



RYAN SIDARTO MUSTANG DAILY FILE PHOTO

Cal Poly's bats woke up this weekend against Cal State Fullerton. In their two wins on Thursday and Friday night, the Mustangs outscored the Titans 11-4.

Going the distance

Radeke, Fischback toss complete games as Cal Poly takes two from conference-leading Cal State Fullerton

J.J. Jenkins

JJENKINS.MD@GMAIL.COM

Not much concerns head coach Larry Lee at this point in the season — not even a 9-3 loss in the final game of a three-game set against No. 5 Cal State Fullerton. It could be because Lee and the Mustangs won their biggest series of the year against Cal State Fullerton at home this weekend. And they did so using one simple method.

Starting pitching.

Cal Poly had two pitchers toss complete games, as the Mustangs took two of three games from the Titans, marking the second series victory over Cal State Fullerton in close to 38 years.

"We accomplished what we needed to accomplish (in the series)," Lee said. "We put ourselves back in the Big West race and, over the course of two weeks, our RPI has gone from 127 to 61."

Mason Radeke moved to 6-1 on the year with a 2.42 ERA, after a complete game Thursday night helped the

Mustangs win 7-2.

Not to be outdone the next night, Steven Fischback threw a complete game five-hitter for his fourth victory of the year. His season has been a constant battle to return to his old form after missing two years following a labrum injury. Friday night's game might just have brought his comeback full-circle.

"It was a special moment facing a ranked team and getting the chance (to pitch the ninth inning) with the coaches behind me, putting me back out there," Fischback said. "I actually felt a little rejuvenated with the fans standing, cheering, knowing you only have three more outs."

With the help of Fischback, who went all nine innings and gave up one earned run, the Mustangs won 4-2 Friday night.

"We're playing our best baseball at this time of the year," Lee said. "We struggled early on, but since conference has started we started playing a lot better. The last couple weeks we just have a confidence

about ourselves."

The Titans jumped on the board first to start the sixth as Anthony Trajano singled to left field on a two out, two strike pitch — scoring Nick Ramirez from second base. Fischback was called for his first balk of the season during the next at-bat, but a grounder to first got him out of the inning without further damage.

The Mustangs were able to counter in the bottom half of the inning using a DJ Gentile sacrifice fly to center to score right fielder Mitch Haniger. Gentile, the Mustangs' designated hitter, is batting .273 on the season with 23 RBIs after two batted in on Friday.

Cal Poly broke the game open the following inning by pushing third baseman Evan Busby across the plate with a sacrifice fly, then loading the bases off walks to Denver Chavez

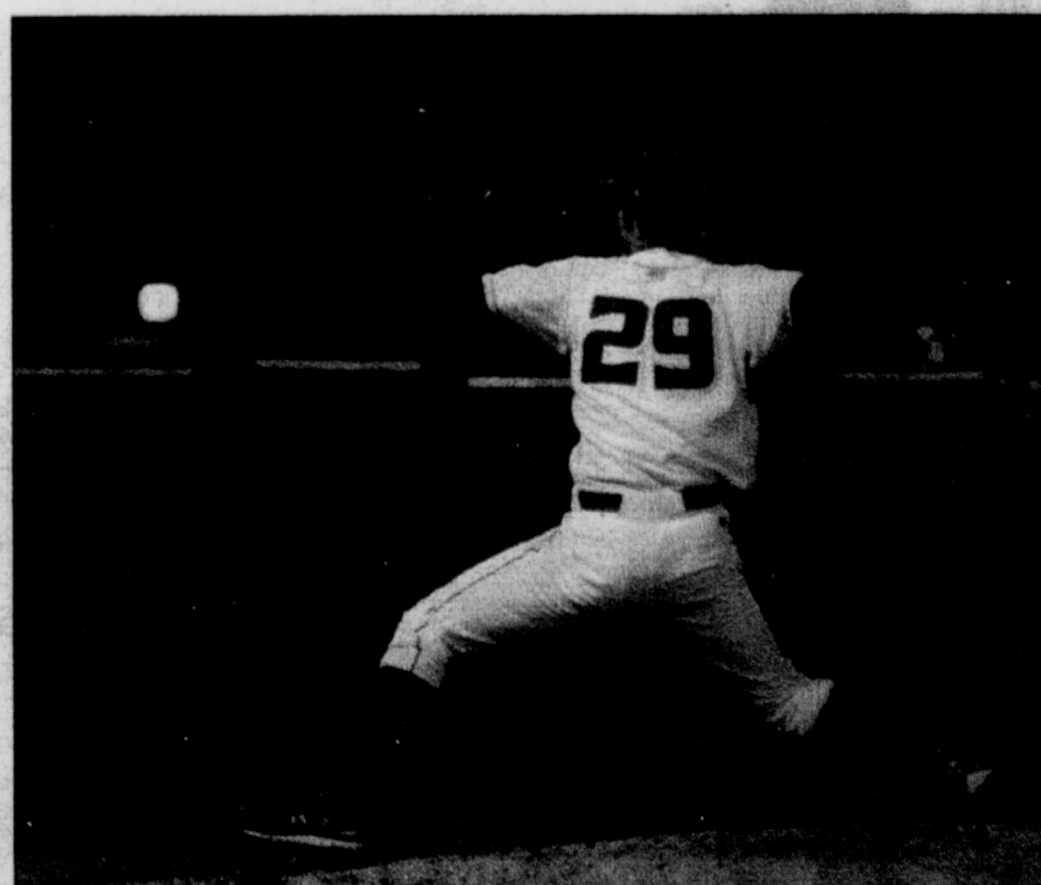
and Haniger. Eight consecutive balls thrown by the Titans forced home two more runs for Cal Poly and put them ahead for good.

Shortstop J.J. Thompson was one of the beneficiaries of those RBI walks, although he went 0-for-3 on the night snapping his 11-game hitting streak. Thompson said he was sad to see the streak go but winning and building team confidence was far more important, especially during a key stretch of the season.

"We have a lot of confidence right now," Thompson said. "I don't think whether we win or lose tomorrow is gonna change the kind of confidence we have now."

Thompson also said he could not pinpoint the exact moment the Mus-

see Baseball, page 11



RYAN SIDARTO MUSTANG DAILY FILE PHOTO

Pitchers Mason Radeke (above) and Steven Fischback became the first duo to pitch complete games since Garrett Olson and Jimmy Shull in May 2005.

Error gives softball win

Mustang Daily Staff Report
MUSTANGDAILYSPORTS@GMAIL.COM

Heading into Saturday's game against Long Beach State, Cal Poly was looking for a break. The Mustangs had been swept two weekends in a row, and after dropping two games to the 49ers Friday, it looked as if they were headed for a third.

But with the help of a big home run by a sophomore pitcher, and a couple of errors, the Mustangs found the luck they needed.

For the first time in almost a month, the Mustangs walked away as victors — beating Long Beach State 5-4 Sunday in the finale of their three-game conference series.

It came in the bottom of the eighth inning, when Nicole Lund crossed the plate after Liz Javier threw wide of first base, giving the Mustangs their first win since April 3, when they defeated UC Riverside 5-4.

Pitcher Rebecca Patton played a key part in fueling it. She started the game and went all eight innings in the circle. She gave up four earned runs, walked two and struck out one.

At the plate, she had a bigger impact. With the Mustangs trailing 4-2 in the sixth inning, Patton belted her first home run of the season to left field, tying the game at 4-4.

That set up the Mustangs' rally in extras, where two errors and a walk gave the Mustangs their only win of the weekend.

In Friday's double header, the Mustangs didn't fare well.

A bases-loaded walk from shortstop Kim Westlund gave Cal Poly its first run of the night, and tied the game at 1-1.

In the fourth, outfielder Nora Sobczak nailed a 1-0 pitch to center, bringing in Patton to give Cal Poly a 2-1 lead.

The momentum shifted in the sixth. Long Beach State's Christina Schallig hit a RBI single

see Softball, page 11

BIG WEST STANDINGS 4.24.11

TEAM	BIG WEST	OVERALL
Cal State Fullerton	9-3 .750	28-11 .718
UC Irvine	8-4 .667	26-10 .722
Cal Poly	8-4 .667	18-17 .514
Long Beach State	6-6 .500	19-18 .514
UC Riverside	4-5 .444	19-14 .576
UC Santa Barbara	4-5 .444	17-17 .500
Pacific	5-7 .417	13-22 .371
UC Davis	3-6 .333	9-24 .273
Cal State Northridge	1-8 .111	18-21 .462

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3	2	1	8	4	9	6	7	5